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TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 38

BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Thirty-eight

THE STAR

THE GREAT yellow star is the Blazing Star of Masonic symbolism. It stands for the Quintessence (fifth essence) of the alchemists. This is clearly indicated by the star's eight principal rays. The eight-spoked designs on the dress of the Fool, the Wheel of Fortune, and this eight-rayed star, are all emblems of the Quintessence which is Spirit, the power behind the energy transmitted to their world-systems by suns. The star has also eight short secondary rays. These rays are fully developed in the symbolism of Key 19.

The seven lesser stars are also eight-rayed to show that they are manifestations of the same Quintessence. They represent also the seven alchemical metals; lead, iron, tin, gold, silver, copper and mercury. These correspond to the seven astrological planets; Saturn, Mars, Jupiter, Sun, Moon, Venus and Mercury. Thus the stars of Key 17 are symbols for the seven interior stars called "chakras" by yogis, which are centers through which the One Force manifests itself in the human body.

The above is a forerunner to instruction you will receive in later lessons. You will then be told more concerning these centers, and will learn practical methods for utilizing the forces which work through them. For the present, this is work for which you are not sufficiently prepared.

Concerning the development of these centers, much has been published. Much of the material found in books is dangerous because it gives technical knowledge to persons who are not qualified to use it, so they often do themselves grave injuries. Worse even than this are those books which fill the mind of the student with a lot of time-wasting nonsense of which he must rid himself before he can receive genuine instruction.

We refuse to enter into argument with persons who cannot see the need for keeping secret certain aspects of occult instruction. They cannot receive the knowledge they clamor for—nor will they find it until they become wise enough to see how vitally necessary is the old rule of secrecy. Thus we frankly admit that in these lessons we hold back not a little, in accordance with ancient usage which we feel to be binding on us. On the other hand, we give you no "blinds" of false interpretation, nor do we waste your time with fruitless practices. When you have taken these preliminary steps in your training, detailed explanation of more advanced work will be available under suitable reserves.

The nude water-bearer is Isis-Urania. She represents truth, and the practice of meditation reveals truth to us without disguise, hence she is nude. Her legs are bent so that each forms an angle of 90 degrees. 90 is the number of the letter Tzaddi, and an angle of 90 degrees is an ancient symbol for justice and rectitude.

The weight of her body rests on her left knee and is supported by earth, representing the facts of physical existence. Her balance is maintained by her right leg, and her right foot rests on the surface of the pool. This means that in meditation something occurs which gives to the usually unstable mind-stuff, symbolized by water, a solidity and stability like that of the physical world. Here is a hint of what alchemists mean when they speak of the "fixation of the volatile".

The two vases are the two personal modes of consciousness, like the two ministers in Key 5, or the man and woman in Key 6. The ellipses on the sides of the vases represent the zero sign, symbol of Spirit and of the "Akasha Tattva". Only two ellipses are shown, but there are really four to signify the expression of Spirit through the four worlds and the four elements.

From the vase in the woman's right hand falls a stream which sets up waves in the pool. The waves are concentric rings, like the circles on Key 10. These waves represent the activity set up in subconsciousness by meditation.

From the other vase a stream falls on land, where it is divided into five parts. This represents the purification and perfection of the five senses by means of meditation. Two important clues to the meaning of Key 17 are that the woman lifts the vases, and the water comes from the pool and goes back to the source whence it came.

The mountain in the background is the same as the one in Keys 6 and 8. It represents the perfection of the Great Work, which is man's conscious control of the inorganic forms of the Life-power's self-expression. This control begins with man's mastery of his own mind and body so that they become open channels for the outflow of the higher aspects of the Life-power's true consciousness.

When this preliminary work with the personal vehicle is completed, then becomes possible the culmination of the Operation of the Sun. This is the actual mastery of the patterns of the inorganic world by what appears to the uninitiated as a mysterious, miracle-working power of the adept. The adept himself, however, knows that this power is latent in all men, and he seeks eagerly for those who are ready to begin the journey to the mountain-peak of mastery.

The tree in the middle distance refers to the human nervous system, which occult diagrams often typify as a tree. The upper part of this tree stands for the brain, and the trunk represents the spinal cord, the sympathetic nerves, and the ganglia of the sympathetic system.

The bird perched in the branches is an ibis, a fishing bird regarded by the Egyptians as being sacred to Thoth, identified by the Greeks with Hermes and by the Romans with Mercury. Here in Key 17 the bird of Hermes reminds us that meditation is begun by, and supervised by, the self-conscious aspect of human personality pictured in Tarot by Key 1, The Magician.

On the diagram of the Cube of Space, the line corresponding to the letter Tzaddi and to Key 17 is the line South-Above, which is the southern boundary of the upper face of the cube.

This upper face is represented in Tarot by the Magician, and since the line corresponding to Key 17 is the southern boundary of this face, we see that Key 17 must represent the southern half of Key 1 where we see a table with the implements of ceremonial magic.

Ceremonial magic itself is one form of meditation because everything done in a magical ceremonial is intended to emphasize the central idea, or seed thought, of the ritual. In this connection, review Lesson 6.

We shall now indicate the direction of the currents of energy in the twelve boundary lines of the Cube of Space. In the diagrams accompanying Lesson 18, some of these are shown in Figure 1. You can add the others to Figure 2.

In the line North-East (Key 4), the current moves downward from Above to Below. In the line South-East (Key 5), it moves upward from Below to Above. In the line East-Above (Key 6), it moves from South to North as may be seen by careful inspection of the symbols on that Key. In the line East-Below (Key 7), it moves from North to South like the river in the picture.

Thus it is possible to trace a continuous line round the boundaries of the eastern face of the cube, beginning with Key 4 from Above to Below, then through the line East-Below from North to South, then from Below to Above up the line South-East, and from the South-East upper corner, through the line East-Above, back to the North-East upper corner.

On the North face of the cube it is impossible to trace a continuous line, for the current in the lines North-Above (Key 8) and North-Below (Key 9), moves in both lines from East to West; and the current in the line North-West (Key 11) moves, like the current in the line North-East (Key 4), from Above to Below.

It is impossible also to trace a continuous path round the western face, because although the line South-West carries a current from Below to Above (Key 13), the lines West-Above and West-Below both carry currents from North to South (Keys 14 and 15).

On the upper face of the cube however, we may trace a continuous line, starting from any corner, for East-Above (Key 6) moves from South to North; North-Above (Key 8) carries a

current from East to West; West-Above (Key 14) runs from North to South; and South-Above (Key 17) carries a current from West to East.

No continuous line may be traced round the lower face because the lines East-Below and West-Below both move from North to South. Nor may a continuous line be drawn round the southern face because the lines South-East and South-West both move from Below to Above; and the line South-Below, like the line South-Above, carries a current from West to East

Note that the line South-Above (Key 17) begins at the upper end of the line South-West (Key 13) and runs back to the upper end of the line South-East (Key 5). Thus this line does actually join the line of Nun, the fish, to that of Vav, the hook (See Lesson 37).

Observe also that the current from the line West-Above (Key 14) and that from the line South-West (Key 13) meet at the point where the line South-Above begins. This indicates that the forces represented by Keys 13 and 14 are blended in Key 17. In every act of right meditation the secret force of Scorpio is aimed by the arrow of Sagittarius.

Furthermore, since the line corresponding to Key 17 ends at the upper point of the line corresponding to Key 5, and the current in the latter moves upward, it is evident that the force carried by Key 17 cannot move downward against the current in the line South-East.

What occurs is that, at the end of a successful period of meditation, one receives, through the activity pictured by the Hierophant, a revelation of some eternal principle which bears directly on one's problem and leads to its solution.

After this has occurred, the current from the line South-Above passes into the line East-Above, symbolized by Key 6. The revelation we receive at the end of a successful meditation becomes part of the conscious awareness of the person meditating. This additional enlightenment then contributes to the exercise of discrimination pictured by Key 6.

At this time we shall not follow the course of the cube boundaries farther. Yet the alert reader will be able to make his own discoveries by applying the principles outlined.

Finally, think well upon this passage from the BOOK OF TOKENS. It contains an important secret concerning Key 17.

> Thinkest thou, O seeker for wisdom,
> That thou bringest thyself into the Light
> By thine own search?
>
> Not so,
> I am the HOOK,

Cast into the waters of darkness,
To bring men from their depths
Into the sphere of true perception.

Entering that sphere,
They must die to their old selves
Even as a fish cast upon the land must die!

Yet do they die only to live again,
And what before seemed life to them,
Now weareth the aspect of death,

Men think they seek me,
But it is I who seek them.
No other seeker is there than myself,
And when I find mine own,
The pain of questing is at an end.
The fish graspeth the hook,
Thinking to find food,
But the fisherman is the enjoyer
of the meal.

DIVINE WISDOM SOLVES PROBLEMS

With Tarot Key 17 we come to definite application of eternal truth to the every-day problems that rear against us. Every bit of B. O. T. A. instruction is intensely practical. As you tread the occult path, you will find this knowledge the reverse of nebulous theory.

It is knowledge that you can put to work, and you will find it always works **if you work it**. By means of it you will know and experience fulfillment in the deepest sense.

First of all, seek the Divine Order which is the true "kingdom of heaven within you". Then seek the expression of the Order in wisdom, love, power, peace, health, riches, or whatever other form your heart desires. All things are good. There is only one basic requirement. You must seek in order to be able to share. Your desire must be truly constructive, and must always take into account the fact that you are a unit of human society.

This Key, the Star, is specifically related to meditation. Yet we like to have you think of it as pointing the way to the correct solution of every problem, big or little, complex or simple. The principles that are emphasized by Key 17 are universal. They apply to all humanity. Put them to work, and you can receive definite and correct answers to anything that perplexes you.

The letter on this card, Tzaddi, is the fish-hook, symbol of the specific means whereby you may get right answers to your questions. This is the fish-hook of silent contemplation. Each of us must use it for himself. So to say, we must angle for the fish—that is, for the right answer, the correct solution.

Where shall we angle? The number of the letter gives us a hint. It is 90, and 90 is the value of the name of the letter on Key 12, the letter Mem, meaning "water". What is this water? Right here we could write pages and pages.

Indeed, we have already written at great length about occult "water" in a lesson for the course on alchemy. Now, however, it is enough to say that this "water of life" is the universal mind-stuff which is the First Matter of alchemy; and it is to be found inside us. Each personal subconscious mind is like a bay in the cosmic mental ocean. In that bay swim the fish (ideas) for which we must angle.

Divine Wisdom has no problems. It already knows all the answers. Just as you put bait on a hook, and just as each kind of bait attracts its own appropriate kind of fish, so does the bait of your present problem have a special attraction for the special fish of Divine Wisdom which will give you the right answer. Your part is to bait the hook by formulating your questions clearly. Then like a good fisherman, you must be still until the fish takes the bait, that is, until you begin to get some ideas.

This is the simple essence of meditation. First, choosing a problem. Second, formulating a clear-cut question (baiting the hook). Third, casting the hook into the bay of inner consciousness. Fourth, patient waiting until you feel a nibble.

This practice has other consequences. Being perfectly still helps to synchronize the activities of certain inner centers of force, symbolized in Key 17 by the stars grouped round the large central star. These are the same as the seven "chakras" of the yogis, the seven seals of the Book of Life, and the seven metals of alchemy. They correspond to seven major whorls of force in your body.

Purified and concentrated thought helps to synchronize these whirling forces. A rhythm is established which attunes us to the greater rhythm of the Cosmic Order. In consequence, poise and balance are established because personality is by this attunement perfectly adjusted to the rhythms of Mother Nature, the kneeling woman of this Key. She is eternally poised, eternally balanced. She rests on a physical basis, the land, but she balances herself with a foot that rests on the surface of the pool. When we achieve stillness, we ourselves do not meditate, we merely participate in the eternal cosmic meditation which lifts the veils hiding the beautiful perfection of the Divine Mother.

Thus we make no attempt to concentrate directly on the body centers. Except under the personal direction of a master teacher (and master teachers do not give public instruction), such concentration, though it often does force centers to open, does not do it in an orderly way. Seldom do real master teachers permit their personal pupils to engage in this dangerous practice. For the ordinary student it will only release a flood of energy he cannot control, and which will almost certainly injure him. This is like blowing a breach in the wall of a dam. The pent-up energy will rush forth, but it will only wreak havoc. Right meditation is like turning the water through the proper channels into the turbines. Here is a word to the wise. See that you heed it!

For similar reasons, avoid trick breathings. Simply watch your breathing to make sure that you establish the habit of breathing deeply, rhythmically, and quietly. One hears people trying to meditate while they puff like locomotives on a grade—and, like the puffing locomotive, they are apt to lose traction. Thus all their wheels spin madly without getting them a foot ahead.

When we tell you to keep mentally and physically still, we mean, among other things, that you must not try to grapple with your problem. That is exactly like a fisherman making a cast and hooking himself in the seat of the pants. And don't continually "jiggle your hook". **Keep still**. These fish are scared away by mental or physical fussiness. Don't bother to wonder what will come, or whether you're meditating correctly. All there is to it is quiet, steady contemplation of the problem as formulated in the question.

When you do get a bite, **land your fish**! Keep your paper and pencil handy, and as soon as an idea strikes, get a good look at it by writing it down. Sometimes just a word. Sometimes you will get sentences, paragraphs, pages. More often than not, what you get won't be what you expected. For in meditation you are, most of the time, like one fishing for a species of fish he has never seen. You don't know the answer. That's why you meditate. Why, then, be amazed when you find the answer different from the frantic guesses which got you nowhere?

All who solve problems successfully use this method to some extent. We are giving you an opportunity to carry it much farther than do most. Always precede your meditation by looking at Key 17. Just let your mind soak it up through your eyes. Then follow the simple directions. **You will get results!**